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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on a survey of the attitudes of 1,292 Australian school principals toward educational and prevocational provisions for the mildly retarded. It was found that all groups of principals, with the exception of those in government metropolitan high schools, were generally positive toward the mainstreaming of gifted, mildly retarded, and sensory handicapped students. The form of placement for mildly retarded most favored by the principals surveyed was that they should remain in the regular class but be withdrawn for special instruction. Most of the principals gave high ranking to the need for teachers to have a knowledge of teaching techniques specially designed for children with learning problems. A modest acceptance was found for the provision of prevocational training for the mildly retarded. Other findings are presented. (DLS)

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(This is one of a series of reports and working papers concerned with the development and evaluation of programs at the Granville Work Preparation Centre by a Macquarie University Research Team. Details of other reports which are available are found on the back page).

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A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF N.S.W. SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TOWARD THE EDUCATIONAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROVISIONS FOR THE MILDLY INTELLECTUALLY HANDICAPPED[1,2]

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INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly the Zeitgeist within Special Education is towards the de-categorization and mainstreaming of the various groups of handicapped children within our school community. In particular, the mildly intellectually handicapped (MIH) have been singled out as the group who could be most effectively integrated into regular classes. Since the early days of the debate of integration versus segregation, referred to by Lilly (1970) as a "teapot in a tempest", leaders in the special education field in the U.S. have united in a clarion call for the implementation of the integration policy (cf Johnson, 1962; Dunn, 1968; Christopolos and Renz, 1960; Lilly, 1971; MacMillan, 1971; Jones, 1972; Hammons, 1972). Of course there have been some notable dissidents (e.g. Kolstoe, 1972; Cruickshank, 1974) and a few such as Iano (1972), Martin (1974), Smith and Arkans (1974), Stephens (1975) have called for caution before special classes are entirely disbanded.

More recently we have witnessed, with the enactment in the U.S. of Public Law 93-112, Section 504 (1973) and Public Law 94-142 (1975), moves to make the integration of all handicapped children mandatory unless it can be shown that a more restrictive alternative is in the educational interests of the child. In this respect Switzky and Miller (1978) provide us with an interesting critique of the "least restrictive alternative" provision in PL94-142.

The integration/segregation debate is certainly not new, but in recent years there have been some attempts to clarify empirically the issues which may lead to more informed decision making. For instance, a large number of studies have explored the social status of the mildly intellectually handicapped who have been placed in regular classes (Strauch, 1970; Goodman, Gottlieb, and Harrison, 1972; Gottlieb and Budoff, 1973; Van Osdol and Johnson, 1973; Iano et al, 1974, Bruininks

and Rynders, 1974; Gottlieb, Gampel and Budoff, 1975;Siperstein and Gottlieb, 1977; Bruininks, 1978) while others have looked at the effects of labelling on the self-attitudes of the mildly retarded (Guthrie, Butler and Gorlow, 1961; Gorlow, Butler and Guthrie, 1963; Gan, Tymchuk and Nishihara, 1977; Severence and Gasstrom, 1977). A popular area for investigation has been comparisons between the self-concept development of segregated and integrated populations (Higgins, 1962; Schurr, Towne and Joiner, 1972; Bacher, 1965; Lambeth, 1967; Parmenter, 1970) with the results being generally equivocal.

Some analysis, too, has been made of the nature of teacher training programs required to support the integration concept (Fox et al, 1974; Herr, Algozzine and Heuchert, 1976; Anderson, Dietrich and Greer, 1976; Steer, 1976), particularly in respect of the variety of consultant teacher/resource room/resource teacher models which have burgeoned with the advent of the mainstreaming issue.

Perhaps of greatest interest is the growing number of studies which are attempting to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of certain delivery models (Porter and Milazzo, 1958; Rucker, Howe and Snider, 1969; Gampel, Gottlieb and Harrison, 1974; Haring and Krug, 1975(a), 1975(b); Gershman, 1975; Hartman & Hartman, 1976; Budoff and Gottlieb, 1976; Keogh and Levitt, 1976; Myers, 1976; Hawkins, 1976; Hogan and Bernstein, 1976; Sindelar and Deno, 1978), but again the overall results are inconclusive owing to methodological difficulties such as the lack of comparability between the evaluation models used. Therefore there is an urgent need for an adequate and comprehensive research model such as the systems approach recommended by MacMillan and Semmel (1972) or that of Jones et al (1978) who have provided a very useful set of guidelines to follow when preparing and appraising mainstream evaluation reports.

Notwithstanding the embracing of the concept of mainstreaming by those in higher education and administrative positions (MacMillan, Jones and Myers, 1976) it is of critical importance to assess the views of teachers to the question. While the issue may be of great moment to special educators, MacMillan et al (1976:5) shrewdly point out that an examination of the current literature in general education reveals

"scant attention to mainstreaming". A well-conducted investigation by Shotel, Iano and McGettigan (1972) showed that regular class teachers expressed the greatest optimism for the integration of LD (Learning disabled) children and were least optimistic regarding the EMR (educable mentally retarded). In a recent study by Algozzine, Mercer and Countermine (1977) the negative effects of labels upon teacher attitudes toward handicapping conditions were strikingly demonstrated. In addition, MacMillan et al (1976) point out that regular class teachers feel ill equipped to handle the problems of the atypical learner. Hence there is a great need, as Shotel et al (1972) urge, for additional strategies being considered for encouraging success and confidence among regular teachers who take handicapped children into their classes.

Recognition of the fact that there is considerable variability among teachers as to the types and degree of deviance they can and will tolerate in their classroom (MacMillan, James and Aloia, 1974) is implicit in the comments of Gickling and Theobold (1975) that we must not fail to appreciate the individual differences, both in competencies and attitudes, of teachers. An interesting finding of their survey of regular special class teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming was that despite the overwhelming agreement that special self-contained classes restricted and discriminated against handicapped children, there was little support to do away with these classes for the mildly handicapped. Both they and Iano (1972) stress the need for improved communication between special and regular educators on issues surrounding the placement of exceptional children. Indeed Iano (1972) strongly supports Lilly's (1970) contention that we look at "exceptional school situations" rather than "exceptional children". The "exceptional school situation" encompasses a much wider perspective by appreciating that schools, classrooms and teachers vary as much as children. Iano (1972) further suggests that in order for integration to be feasible the elementary school must adopt non-graded flexible patterns of organization that will be more receptive to individual differences. This is possibly just as germane at the secondary school level.

The results of a study of public attitudes toward mildly retarded children by Gottlieb and Corman (1975) also suggest that the attitudes

of people who have not had contact with retarded persons must be considered when the integration issue is being examined.

In Australia decisions regarding service delivery of special education programs have been posited largely upon a philosophical rather than a research foundation. It is imperative, therefore, that we do not follow blindly overseas trends or extrapolate their research findings to Australia for as Watts et al (in Andrews, 1978:70) warn in their preliminary report of findings of a three-state survey of the education of the mildly intellectually handicapped,

> *the evidence obtained suggests caution in the application of research results from educable mentally retarded classes in North America to the Australian scene, because of the important differences in social class and ethnic membership of the clientele of programs for mildly mentally handicapped children and adolescents in the countries concerned.*

Of course, too, we must not lose sight of the fact that the vast majority of the M.I.H. are already integrated into regular classes, for special school or class provision is usually only made when very obvious deficiencies such as social immaturity or severe behaviour problems are manifested by children falling into this psychometric category. Research into the effectiveness of educational provisions for this "de facto" integrated group is also virtually non-existent.

A preliminary report of a study of a Work Preparation Centre (W.P.C.) for the M.I.H. (Ward et al, 1977) highlighted various differences among four groups of school leavers. Within the limitations of the samples, it appeared that the most disadvantaged school leaver, in vocational terms, came from special classes attached to regular high schools. Employment patterns for the remaining three groups; Work Preparation Centre graduates, regular and special school leavers, proved to be very similar. It was also determined that the more multiply handicapped school leaver was being referred for placement at the W.P.C. These findings, together with the various policy statements on the education of the handicapped made by bodies such as the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel, 1973) and the Director-General of Education in N.S.W. (Buggie, 1976) and the Director of Primary Education (Swan, 1976) prompted the writers to investigate the attitudes of N.S.W. school principals toward a number of key issues concerning the educational and prevocatioral provisions for the M.I.H. School principals were chosen as the survey population owing to their unique leadership role in stimulating and shaping school policy, and their increasing autonomy in effecting resource management within schools.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Answers were sought to the following eight major questions:

1. What were their attitudes toward the integration of various categories of handicapped children?
2. What form of placement did they prefer for a M.I.H. child?
3. To whom would they turn for assistance in the integration of the M.I.H?
4. What added competencies did they feel that regular class teachers needed to effect a policy of integration successfully?
5. What pattern of teacher training did they prefer for the preparation of teachers to handle these children in regular classes?
6. What factors did they see militating against a policy of integration?
7. What were their views on the question of whether pre-vocational training should be provided at the school level?
8. Were there any differences in the responses among the various groups of school principals to each of the above questions?

METHOD

Procedures and Sampling

To obtain answers to the above questions a draft questionnaire was prepared and mailed to 100 randomly selected school principals across N.S.W. Data including sex of respondent, years of service, type of school, government or non-government, enrolment, country or metropolitan and details of any special classes within the school were sought for each respondent. In respect of the major questions respondents scored the strength of this agreement or disagreement with a number of statements on a 5-point Likert type scale. After an analysis of the responses to the pilot instrument, a final draft was prepared in which respondents could rank in order of preference various optional provisions for the M.I.H. in addition to the Likert ratings for each item.

This form was then mailed to all principals in government high schools or special schools; to a randomly selected sample of government primary principals (excluding class 4 schools); and to all principals of primary, high and special non-government schools. An accompanying letter explained the purpose of the survey and respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaires in a reply paid envelope.

Independent Variables

Of the 2478 principals sent questionnaires, 1292 (52.2%) respondents constituted the sample, after some were dropped owing to lack of sufficient data.

TABLE 1. Sample Composition of NSW Principals in Relation to Population

		POPULATION	SAMPLE	% POP
GOV	HIGH SCHOOL	403	253	62.78
	PRIMARY SCHOOL	1315	729	55.44
	SPECIAL SCHOOL	91	46	50.50
NON GOV		669	264	39.46
TOTAL		2478	1292	52.24

Table 1 presents a breakdown of school categories in the government schools. High schools in the sample represented 62.78% of the population sampled, primary schools 55.44% and special 50.5%. Such a breakdown was not available for the non-government schools, although the overall response was 39.46% of the population sampled.

TABLE 2. Percentage Distribution of Gov : Non-Gov Principals in Sample Obtained

	n	%
GOV	1028	79.6
NON GOV	264	20.4
TOTAL	1292	100.0

As can be seen from Table 2, government schools constituted 79.6% of the sample and non-government 10.4%.

TABLE 3. Within Sample Distribution of NSW Principals

	GOV	NON GOV	OVERALL
HIGH SCHOOL	24.60%	28.79%	25.44%
PRIMARY SCHOOL	70.91%	66.66%	69.99%
SPECIAL SCHOOL	4.47%	4.54%	4.48%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Males accounted for 78.11% of the sample, while females accounted for 21.83% (Tables 4 and 5). Within the total sample, 52.7% were from metropolitan schools (Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong), while 47.3% were from the country. Schools sampled had a mean enrolment of 436 with a range of 8 - 2200, while for years of service as a principal there was a mean of 7.76 years with a range of less than 1 year to 43 years. Interestingly principals with one or two years experience constituted 25% of the sample. 222 or 17.7% of principals indicated that their school contained a special class or classes for M.I.H. children.

TABLE 4. Distribution of Male Principals in Survey Sample

		HIGH SCHOOL		PRIMARY SCHOOL		SPECIAL SCHOOL	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
METROP	GOV	107	10.59	327	32.38	25	2.48
	NON GOV	23	2.28	26	1.58	3	.29
COUNTRY	GOV	123	12.17	345	34.16	8	.79
	NON GOV	13	1.01	18	1.78	2	.19

n=1010

TABLE 5. Distribution of Female Principals in Survey Sample

		HIGH SCHOOL		PRIMARY SCHOOL		SPECIAL SCHOOL	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
METROP	GOV	22	7.8	46	16.31	8	2.84
	NON GOV	24	8.51	75	26.59	3	1.06
COUNTRY	GOV	1	.35	11	3.90	5	1.77
	NON GOV	16	5.67	67	23.76	4	1.42

n=282

Data were analyzed by determining the modal responses for the overall sample on each question. On the basis of the modes and the accompanying percentages of the sample which contributed to them, preferences within each question have been ranked from the most to least popular alternative. Wherever differential patterns of responding have occurred for sub-groups within the total sample these have been indicated. For the total sample modes, coefficients of variation have been indicated. Figures indicate, for each question, the overall modal response as well as sub-categories which appear to have a differential response pattern.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration of the M.I.H. and other categories of handicap

The first question of the dependent variables section of the survey (Question 8) sought the attitudes of principals to the integration of various categories of handicapped children into regular classes. Using a rating of 1 ("I strongly disagree with this") to 5 ("I strongly agree with this") principals rated their agreement to the statement "I believe the following groups of exceptional children can be integrated into regular classes". Modes and modal ranks are indicated in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Order of Preference for the Integration of Exceptional Children into Regular Classes

Rank	Class	Mode	%	Coefficient of Variation
1	OC Intellectually Gifted	5	51.4	.316
2	OA Mildly Intellectually Handicapped	4	47.4	.444
3	OL Language Disabled	4	32.6	.457
4	OB Visually Impaired	4	31.6	.474
5	OD Hearing Impaired	4	31.3	.466
6	Crippled/Spastic Children	4	26.3	.518
7	OP Perceptually Impaired	3	28.1	.479
8	OF Moderately Intellectually Handicapped	2	28.7	.526
9	Emotionally disturbed	2	27.7	.569

However, there were some interesting variations to the overall results when sub-groups of principals were considered. For instance, government metropolitan high school principals ranked the integration of the M.I.H. 7th out of the 9 categories (mode = 2; "I am inclined not to agree with this"). Non government metropolitan primary principals used either rank 4 or 5 for each category and thus were consistently positive for integration. They were followed by non-government metropolitan high using either rank 4 or 3 (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Here

Least responsive on the integration question were government metropolitan high, and government country special schools, both of whom ranked all groups with the exception of the intellectually gifted (OC) significantly lower than the overall groups (Sign test: $p < .01$). The emotionally disturbed category was consistently ranked lowest by all sub-groups of principals with the exception of non-government metropolitan high who ranked all groups above 3.

Ratings for Referral Agencies

Principals were then asked (Question 9) on the same scale, to nominate preferred referral agencies for diagnosis should a child be suspected of being mildly intellectually handicapped. Results are found in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Order of Preference for Referral Agencies

Rank	Agency	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	School Counsellor	5	59.5	.276
2	Child Guidance Clinic	5	39.5	.371
3	Family Physician	2	24.2	.637
4	A Private Psychological Clinic	2	25.3	.637

When using modes, the most preferred response is unclear. The school counsellor was considered to be the person who could most ably deal with referral for diagnosis of the M.I.H. by the majority of schools. However, government metropolitan primary, non-government metropolitan high and non-government country primary chose the Child Guidance Clinic as their first choice. On percent of overall mode, the private psychological clinic

received a rank of 1 by 25.3% of the sample, Government metropolitan high were bimodal for the least preferred with 24.2% for both family physician and private psychological clinic (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Here

Ratings for facilities for the M.I.H.

Question 10 asked in what facility the child should be placed following diagnosis. Results are indicated in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Order of preference for placement of pupil diagnosed as M.I.H.

Rank	Facility	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	Regular class with adaptation	4	39.7	.421
2	Special Class in Regular School	4	26.3	.522
3	Special School	2	34.3	.655

Placement in a special school was consistently rated the lowest with modes of 1 or 2. Regular class placement with organisational and/or instructional changes was the most favoured choice over all, but government metropolitan high principals more strongly favoured a special class in a regular school. Non-government country primary schools gave the strongest response for the regular class with adaptations (see Fig.3).

Fig. 3 Here

Ratings of Support Agents

Principals were also asked what support they felt was needed to integrate effectively the M.I.H. pupil in the regular class (Question 11). Results are found in Table 9.

TABLE 9. Order of Preference of Options to Support M.I.H. in Regular Class

Rank	Organization	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	Trained resource teacher to withdraw pupils for intensive specialized instruction	5	48.6	.319
2	Regular teacher, smaller class	4	41.4	.377
3	Trained itinerant consultant	4	37.6	.431
*4	Trained teacher to work alongside regular teacher	4	34.9	.378
5	Parent tutoring	1	29.5	.575

*(Note: this preference on modes is quite different from the preference of means in which case the order on ranks above would be 1, 4, 2, 3, 5. This is possibly a truer reflection of the responses in this case).

It can be seen that most highly favoured response was for a trained resource teacher to withdraw pupils for instruction. A regular teacher with a smaller class, a trained itinerant consultant and a trained teacher to work beside the regular teacher were rated as having "some merit" (rating 4). All groups except one felt that parent tutoring was definitely not a good idea. The exception was government country high who were "not sure if this is a good idea". Government country special schools rated the itinerant consultant as having "little merit", possibly because they see so little of such persons (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Here

Ranking Agencies to Assist Integration of M.I.H.

Principals were then asked to list their order of preference when considering agencies that might assist in the integration of the M.I.H. child into the regular class (Question 12). Table 10 contains the overall rankings.

TABLE 10. Order of preference for referral agencies to assist with integration of M.I.H.

Rank	Agency	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	School counsellor	6	48.9	.23
2	Resource/Remedial Teacher	6	28.4	.37
3	Itinerant special education consultant	4	32.3	.35
4	Child guidance clinic	3	33.7	.35
5	Private Psych. Clinic	1	42.1	.55
6	Family Physician	1	42.1	.69

The school counsellor was ranked first by 48.9% of the sample, and all schools ranked the counsellor 1 or 2 with the exception of non-government metropolitan high who gave a rank of 3, preferring a resource/remedial teacher as their first choice. Non-government metropolitan special schools and non-government country primary principals chose the Child Guidance Clinic as their first choice. Least preferred were the family physician and the private psychological clinic (see Fig. 5). Availability of resources appears to be a determining factor in the pattern of responses for this question.

Fig. 5 Here

Ranking of Facilities for M.I.H.

Principals were then asked to rank in order of preference various organizational patterns to cater for the educational needs of the M.I.H. (Question 13). Table 11 indicates their overall order of preference.

TABLE 11. Order of preference of facility for M.I.H.

Rank	Facility	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	Retain in reg.class,withdraw for special instruction	6	40.7	.21
2	Retain in reg.class,trained res.teacher side by side	5	33.9	.26
3	Retain in reg.school,place in special class	4	23.5	.37
4	Retain in reg.class,seek parent help	2	29.7	.51
5	Retain in small reg.class,no additional assistance	1	25.3	.52
6	Seek placement in a special school	1	39.1	.66

The most popular ranking was for retention in the regular class, but with withdrawal for special instruction by a trained resource teacher in subjects with which they have problems. However, there was not a uniform ranking of 1 for this option by all schools. Government high and government country special schools wanted the M.I.H. student retained in a regular school, but placed in a special self-contained class. Government country high schools gave the special class (27%) and the regular class with withdrawal (41.8%) both a ranking of 1. Government metropolitan special schools, non-government country primary and special schools favoured the M.I.H. student being retained in a regular class, but with a trained resource teacher to work side by side with the regular class teacher. Special school placement was ranked last by 39.1% of the overall sample, while retention in a small regular class with no additional assistance was also ranked very low. Nor surprisingly, government metropolitan special schools ranked special school placement a little higher (4th) than the overall sample. Again, as in Question 11, parent tutoring was not favourably considered. Fig. 6 indicates these differential responses.

Fig. 6 Here

Competencies Required by Teachers of M.I.H.

Principals were also asked what competencies would be required of regular teachers in an integrated classroom (Question 14). Table 12 shows their order of preference.

TABLE 12. Ranking of teacher competencies

Rank	Competencies	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	A knowledge of teaching techniques specially designed for children with learning problems	6	56.6	.16
2	A knowledge of psychological, social & physical characteristics of exceptional children	5	35.4	.27
3	A knowledge of the techniques of assessment & evaluation of teaching procedures.	3	28.1	.38
4	The skills to design curriculum materials	3	26.6	.39
5	The ability to discuss confidentially the problems of exceptional children with their parents	2	32.5	.42
6	A knowledge of and skill in operating specialized equipment such as audio visual aids	1	70.6	.53

A knowledge of teaching techniques specially designed for children with learning problems was given a rank of 1 by 56.6% of the overall sample. Non-government school principals equally preferred "a knowledge of psychological, social and physical characteristics of exceptional children" as first choice, possibly reflecting the emphasis certain teacher training institutions give to descriptive type special education courses. Government schools ranked this as their second choice, and surprisingly, a knowledge of the techniques of assessment and evaluation of teaching procedure, a mandatory provision of the U.S. Public Law 94-142, was ranked fairly low. All goups ranked the ability to use specialized equipment very low. Nor were curriculum skills or the ability to discuss problems with parents ranked highly. However, the nature of the scale forced respondents to list their choices in order of preference and additional comments by principals indicated that they saw many of these options as being of equal merit. Fig. 7 shows some of the differential rankings.

Fig. 7 Here

Types of Teacher Training Courses

If integration were to be considered, and given that teachers may require additional competencies, principals were asked what course structure might they prefer (Question 15). Table 13 presents this order of preference.

TABLE 13. Ranking of Teacher Training Courses

Rank	Program	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	1 yr.full time,post training CAE or Uni	5	40.7	.42
2	6 mths full time,post training, CAE or Uni	4	44.4	.29
3	A series of intensive(e.g.2 weeks) courses organized on a regional basis	3	28.5	.37
4	A series of short (1-3 days)inservice courses within the school	1	34.5	.6
5	Additional preservice training at CAE or Uni	1	38.1	.56

A one year full time post training course at a CAE or University was preferred by all principals, but non-government school principals also ranked a series of intensive (e.g. 2 weeks) inservice courses organized on a regional basis as choice 1 although at a lower percentage than the one year

course. This may reflect the difficulties non-government schools would have in obtaining full time release for practising teachers. Second preference was for a six months full time post training course. Generally additional preservice training was ranked last, but non-government metropolitan primary and special schools gave a rank of 3 for this option. There was no clear cut pattern for the least preferred option and the overall results seem to indicate a preference for the status quo. Fig. 8 presents the pattern of responses to this question.

Fig. 8 Here

Factors Militating Against Integration

At this point principals were asked to rank in order of preference those factors which might militate against the successful integration of the M.I.H. into regular classes (Question 16). Ranks are indicated in Table 13.

TABLE 13. Rankings of factors militating against integration

Rank	Factor	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	Lack of skills & competencies of regular class teachers	7	42.1	.26
2	Size of regular classes	6	25.2	.35
3	Distractible behaviour of some of these children	5	22.4	.40
4	Attitudes of regular class teachers	4	15.8	.48
5	Disruption of regular class program	2	19.2	.35
6	Attitudes of other children in class	2	21.5	.51
7	Attitudes of parents of the 'normal' children in the class	1	35.6	.64

All principals ranked "the lack of skills and competencies of regular class teachers to teach these children effectively" first, with all principals except government and non-government metropolitan special schools ranking the sizes of regular class as second in importance. Special school principals were fairly unanimous in their high ranking for the attitudes of regular class teachers as being an impediment to successful integration. A separate analysis of those school principals who had a special class for the M.I.H. showed that they, too, ranked this point much higher than the overall sample. Non-government metropolitan primary

principals selected the distractible behaviour of some of these children as their second and third choices. The attitudes of parents of "normal" children in the class was ranked very low as a factor. It is difficult to know whether this confirms a general apathy to parent involvement as indicated in earlier questions or whether it is genuinely felt that parents of "normal" children would not object to having M.I.H. children in the regular class. Non-government metropolitan principals also ranked the attitudes of other children in the class as being important. Fig. 9 illustrates these patterns.

Fig 9 Here

Attitudes Toward Pre-vocational Training as Part of School Responsibility

All high school and special school principals were asked to indicate their attitudes, on a Likert 5-point scale, toward pre-vocational training as being part the responsibility of the secondary school (Question 17). The overall rating is found in Table 14.

TABLE 14. Rating of attitudes to pre-vocational training

	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
It is part of the responsibility of secondary schools to prepare the M.I.H. to obtain and hold satisfactory employment	4	34.37	.25

The overall rating for this question was 4 (34.37%) which indicates that most principals "are inclined to agree" with it. Government special schools, however, rated it as 5 showing that they "strongly agreed". Non-government metropolitan high school principals were bimodal on this question with equal ratings for 4 and 5. 71 or 18.35% of the respondents had no opinion on this question, but the setting out of the survey instrument may have contributed to this low response.

Preferred Pre-Vocational Curriculum for M.I.H.

The final question (Question 18) asked principals to rank a number of secondary curricula for the M.I.H. in order of preference. These ranks are found in Table 15.

TABLE 15. Ranking of Secondary Curricula for M.I.H.

Rank	Curriculum	Mode	%	Coef. of Variation
1	Emphasis upon basic skills plus Work Experience	4	53.4	.24
2	Emphasis upon basic academic & social skills	3	28.7	.42
3	Emphasis upon craft, art and domestic science	2	34.0	.47
4	Training in specific job skills	1	35.4	.47

There was a general consensus that a curriculum emphasizing basic skills supplemented with a work experience program was the most preferable although government metropolitan high schools ranked equally a curriculum emphasizing basic academic and social skills. This appears to support the generally conservative stand this group took throughout the survey. Specific job skill training was ranked last overall, but country special schools gave this a rank of 2. This is understandable, for many of these schools would send their leavers onto sheltered workshops. Non-government metropolitan special schools ranked basic academic and social skills lower than most others, but also gave a high ranking to training in specific job skills. Fig. 10 shows the different responses for a number of groups.

Fig. 10 Here

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Except for government metropolitan high schools all groups of principals were generally positive toward the integration into regular classes of the gifted, M.I.H. and sensory handicapped. For the remaining categories of handicap there was not the same consensus. It is rather significant that the only category for which there was an enthusiastic response was the gifted ("I strongly agree with this"). Not surprisingly there was a high degree of unanimity for rating the emotionally disturbed at the lower end of the scale. However, this finding is contrary to that of Shotel et al (1972) who found that teachers were generally more positive in their attitudes toward the emotionally disturbed than they were toward the M.I.H. In essence, as Algozzine (1973) points out, it is the "disturbing behaviours" which concern teachers and hence the label "emotionally disturbed child" is possibly used rather loosely by most educators. Analyses to date have not indicated a differential

pattern of attitudes toward integration on the basis of school size or geographical area as found by Payne and Murray (1974) although it is acknowledged that smaller schools may be able to effect an integration policy more readily than the larger ones. Interestingly non-government school principals were as positive toward the integration of the M.I.H.as government schools, although it is generally considered that children diagnosed as M.I.H. in non-government schools are encouraged to attend government schools.

The second aim of the study was to determine the form of placement preferred for the M.I.H. child. Questions 10, 11 and 13 addressed this issue in a variety of ways and the results tend to support the view that he should remain in the regular class but be withdrawn for special instruction. The next favoured option was for retention in a regular class with a trained resource teacher working side by side with the teacher. However, government high schools preferred the self-contained special class while non-government high schools were more inclined toward the regular class with special withdrawal. Smaller classes were perceived as a way to facilitate integration, but parent tutoring was uniformly unpopular.

Both Questions 9 and 12 probed a similar area; to whom would you refer a M.I.H. child for diagnosis and to whom would you turn for assistance in integrating him into a regular class. Question 12 had two additional sources of aid; the itinerant consultant and the resource/remedial teacher. On both questions the government school principals ranked the school counsellor as highest choice. This result surely questions either the availability of resource personnel or their effectiveness to date. In terms of the stated policy of the Department of Education (Swan, 1976) the role of the resource teacher is to,

> *... provide supportive service to the school as a whole in respect of these children with learning problems. This service will be integrative in character, i.e. the work of the resource teacher will be integrated with and directly supportive to the ... regular classroom ... The resource teacher will therefore work extensively alongside the class teacher ...*

Yet it was the non-government sector which ranked the resource teacher more highly.

The general feeling of inadequacy by regular class teachers to teach the learning disabled, alluded to by MacMillan et al (1976) is supported

by the high ranking given by principals in this study to the need for teachers to have " a knowledge of teaching techniques specially designed for children with learning problems". The fact that principals rated a knowledge of the psychology of the disabled learner ahead of curriculum building skills and assessment and evaluation of teaching procedures possibly indicates that they as a body are not fully informed of the developments in instructional technologies that have emerged in recent years.

It is fairly obvious that principals generally have accepted the current pattern of training for special education and resource teachers, that is, either a one year or 6 month post training course at a CAE or University. Non-government schools find the suggested series of intensive 2-week courses appealing, but it can be only speculated if this preference was posed upon educational or administrative grounds.

While the lack of skills and competencies of regular class teachers emerged as the most important impediment to the success of an integration policy, the picture is not at all clear cut on this question. There was a high degree of variation among the responses, in particular the item concerning the attitudes of regular class teachers (cf Table 13). In this respect the results of a survey of all administrators of special education programs for the M.I.H. in Oregon (Warnock, 1976) which indicated that the greatest perceived administrative problem concerned the changing of attitudes on the part of teachers and students, are of interest. The complexity of this issue is highlighted by Kennon and Sandoval (1978) who in a Californian study found no significant differences in attitudes between special and regular educators toward the M.I.H. They subsequently suggested that factors other than teacher attitudes such as "flexibility in providing a range of materials and assignments" (144) would determine the success or failure of California's plan to integrate exceptional children.

There seems to be a modest acceptance by principals of regular high schools for the provision of pre-vocational training in schools for the M.I.H. Naturally special school principals were more enthusiastic on this question. Again metropolitan government high school principals were equivocal on the question of curriculum by preferring a traditional basic academic and social skills program equally as well as a curriculum

involving work experience programs. Of special interest is the low ranking principals generally gave what was once the traditional fare for slow learners - viz. art, craft and domestic science.

A word of caution concerning the analyses of these data is sounded, for in reporting our findings modal values have been consistently used. This sometimes masks the degree of variation among the responses, although our reporting of the coefficients of variation and the percentage of responses which contributes to particular modes would alert the reader to areas where this occurs. Indeed, it is the hetereogeneity of the attitudes expressed by principals in this survey which possibly presents us with the greatest challenge. In this respect it would seem imperative that steps be taken to inform principals of the relative values of the range of options that are available to them in implementing policies which are being set by central administrations for as Melcher (1972) points out, principals have little academic background on the needs of the handicapped. There is a need, too, to encourage administration and schools to participate in experimental research to determine the effectiveness of particular instructional and resource models, so as to better inform the decisions that are made at both levels. At the moment, at least, the philosophical commitment to mainstreaming seems to have gone beyond its research support.

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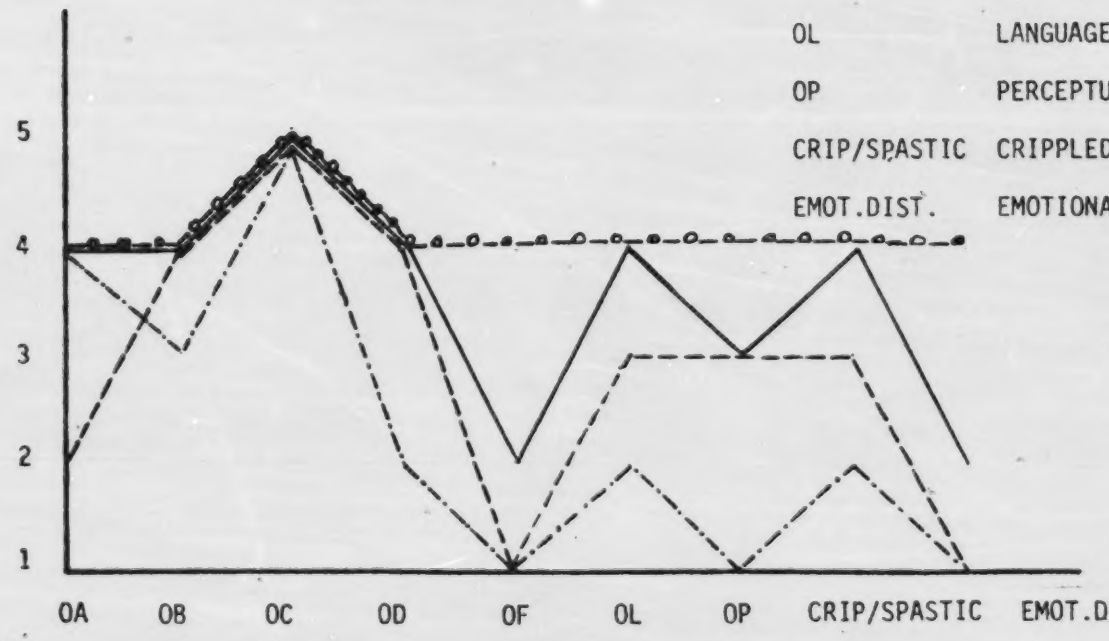
Fig. 1: ATTITUDES OF PRINCIPALS TO INTEGRATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CH'N INTO REGULAR CLASSES



OA	MILDLY INTELL. H'CAPPED
OB	VISUALLY IMPAIRED
OC	INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED
OD	HEARING IMPAIRED
OF	MODERATELY INTELL. H'CAPPED
OL	LANGUAGE DISABLED
OP	PERCEPTUALLY IMPAIRED
CRIP/SPASTIC	CRIPPLED SPASTIC CHILDREN
EMOT.DIST.	EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED

Overall _____
Gov.Met.H.S._ _ _ _
Gov.Ctry Spec.S_._._
Non Gov.Met.Prim_o

2: ATTITUDES OF PRINCIPALS AS TO WHOM SUSPECTED MIH CHILD SHOULD BE REFERRED FOR DIAGNOSIS

9.1 Family physician

9.2 Child Guidance Clinic

9.3 Private psychol.Clinic

9.4 School counsellor

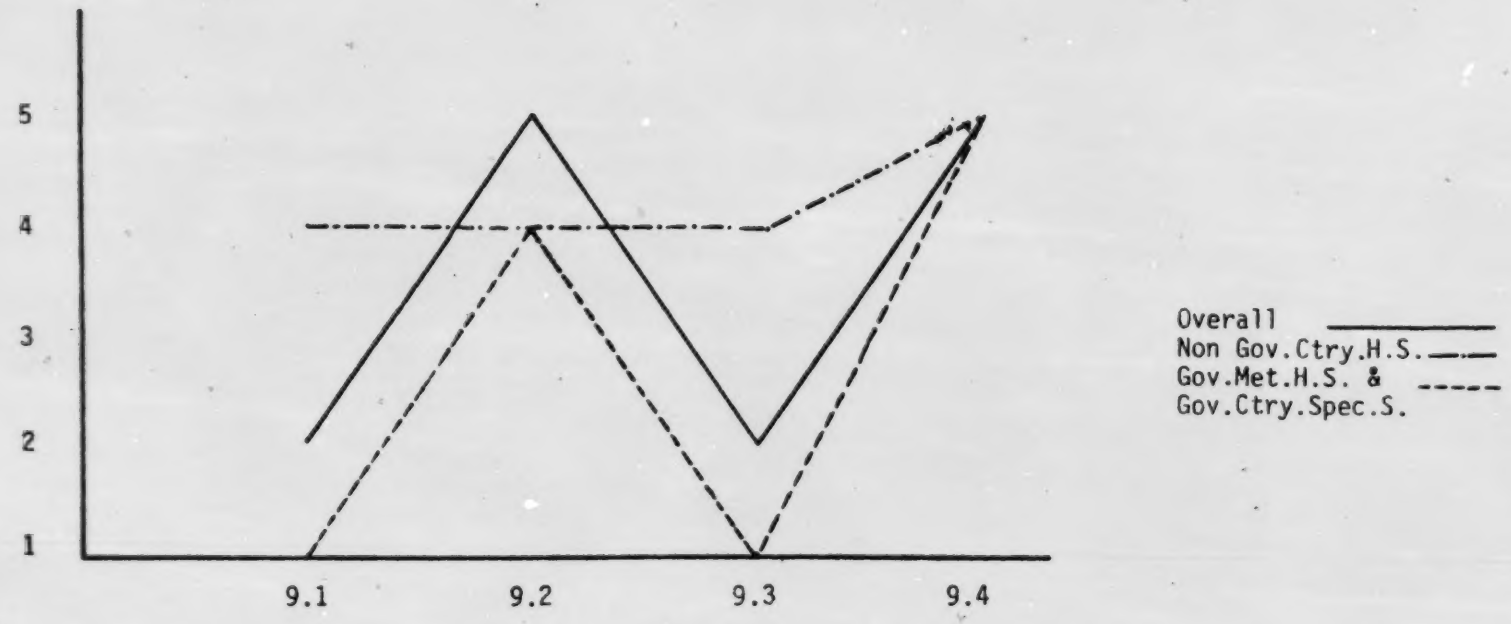
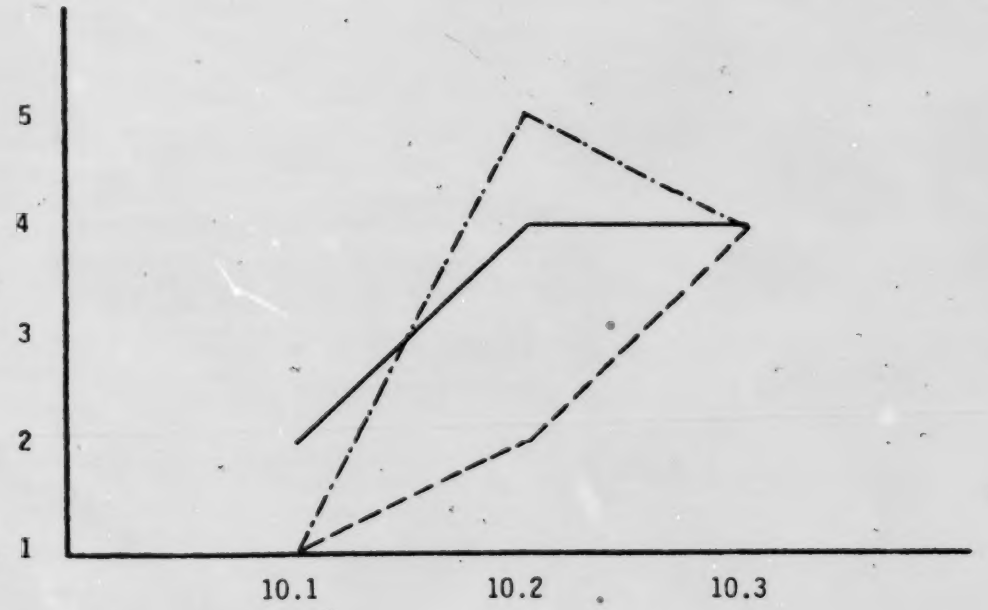


Fig. 3: ATTITUDES OF PRINCIPALS ON PLACEMENT AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF MIH

10.1 Special School

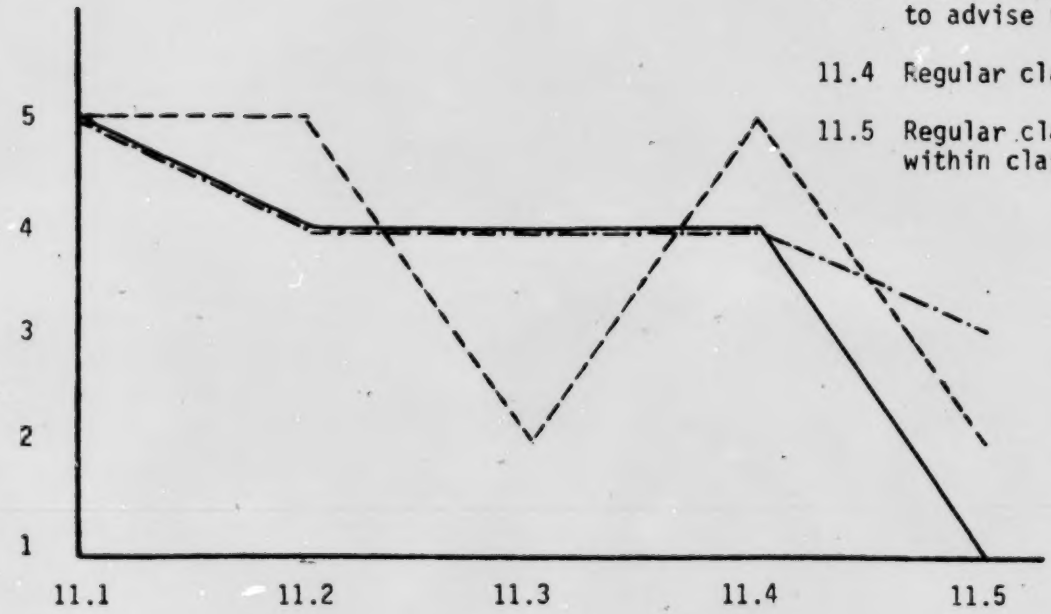
10.2 Regular Class,adjusted

10.3 Regular school, special class



Overall _____
Gov.Met.H.S. _ _ _ _ _
Non Gov.Ctry.Prim _._._

Fig. 4: ATTITUDES OF PRINCIPALS AS TO EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR MIH CHILD IN REG. CLASS



11.1 Trained resource teacher to withdraw pupil for intensive instruction in problem area

11.2 Trained teacher to advise work in classroom with regular teacher

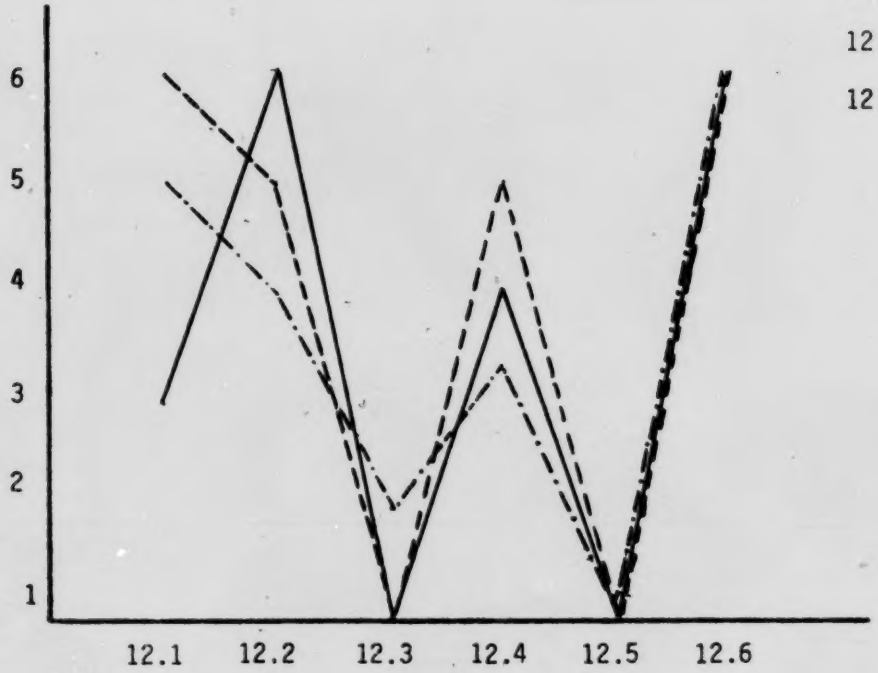
11.3 Trained itinerant consultant to advise regular teachers

11.4 Regular class teacher, small class

11.5 Regular class + parent tutoring within class

Overall ————————
Gov.Ctry.Spec S. — — —
Gov.Ctry H.S. —·—·—

Fig. 5: PRINCIPALS PREFERENCES OF AGENCIES THAT WOULD ASSIST IN INTEGRATION OF MIH CHILD INTO REGULAR CLASS



12.1 Child Guidance Clinic

12.1 School Counsellor

12.3 Private Psychological Clinic

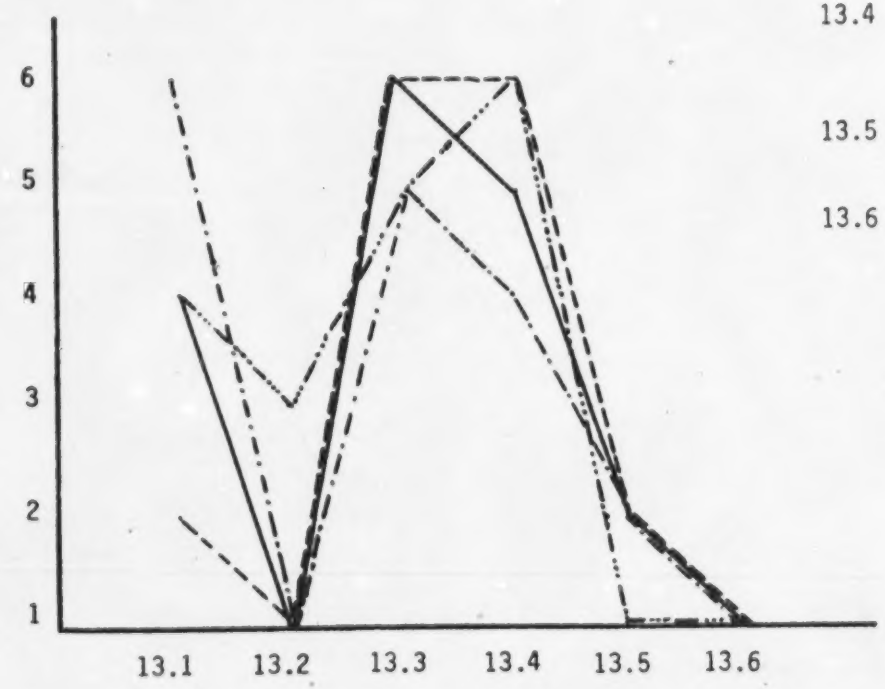
12.4 Itinerant Spec.Ed.Consultant

12.5 Family Physician

12.6 Resource/Remedial Teacher

Overall _____
Non.Gov.Ctry.Prim _ _ _
Non.Gov.Met.H.S. _._._

Fig. 6: PRINCIPALS PREFERENCES OF VIABLE OPTIONS IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO MIH CHILD



13.1 Regular school,special class

13.2 Special school

13.3 Regular class,withdrawn to trained resource teacher

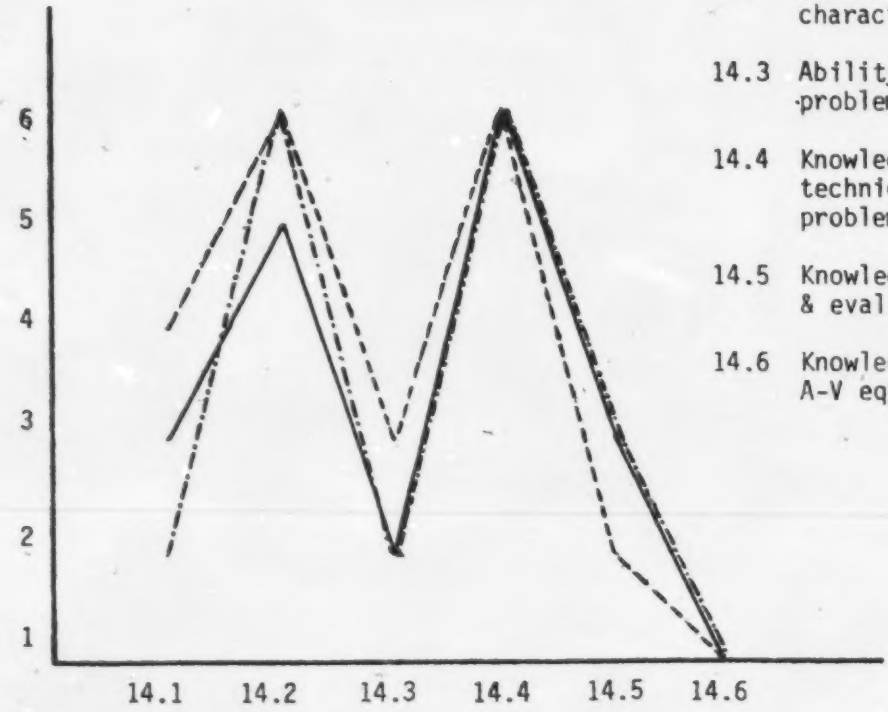
13.4 Regular class,trained resource teacher work side by side regular teacher

13.5 Retain in regular class, parent tutoring within class

13.6 Retain small regular class, no additional assistance

Overall ————————
Non Gov.Ctry.Primary — — —
Gov.Met.H.S. —·—·—·—·—
Gov.Met.S.S. ···—···—···—

Fig. 7: PRINCIPALS RANKINGS OF ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES THAT REGULAR TEACHERS MAY REQUIRE IN AN INTEGRATED CLASSROOM



14.1 Skills to design curriculum materials

14.2 Knowledge of psych.,social & phys. characteristics of except'n'l ch'n.

14.3 Ability to discuss confidentially problems of except'n'l ch'n with parents

14.4 Knowledge of specially designed teaching techniques for ch'n with learning problems

14.5 Knowledge of techniques of assessment & eval'n of teaching procedure

14.6 Knowledge & skill for operation of A-V equipment

Overall ————
Non.Gov.Ctry.H.S. – – –
Non.Gov.Ctry.Prim –.–.–

Fig. 8: RANKED PREFERENCES OF PRINCIPALS AS TO COURSES THAT MIGHT ADEQUATELY PREPARE TEACHER OF CH'N AT RISK EDUCATIONALLY

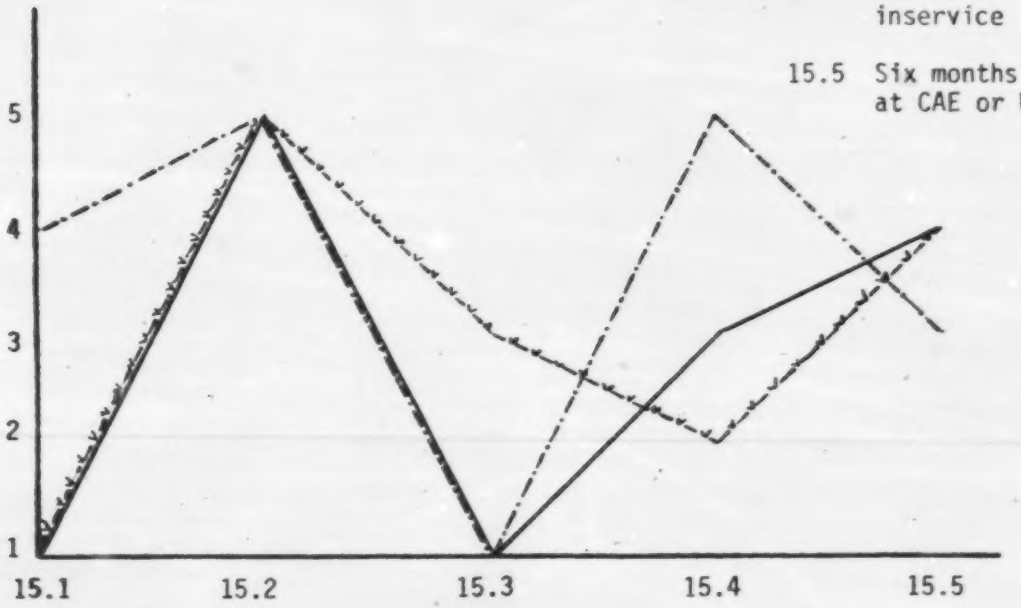
15.1 Short(1-3 days) inservice courses within school

15.2 One year,full time,post training at CAE or Univ.

15.3 Extra pre-service training at CAE or Uni.

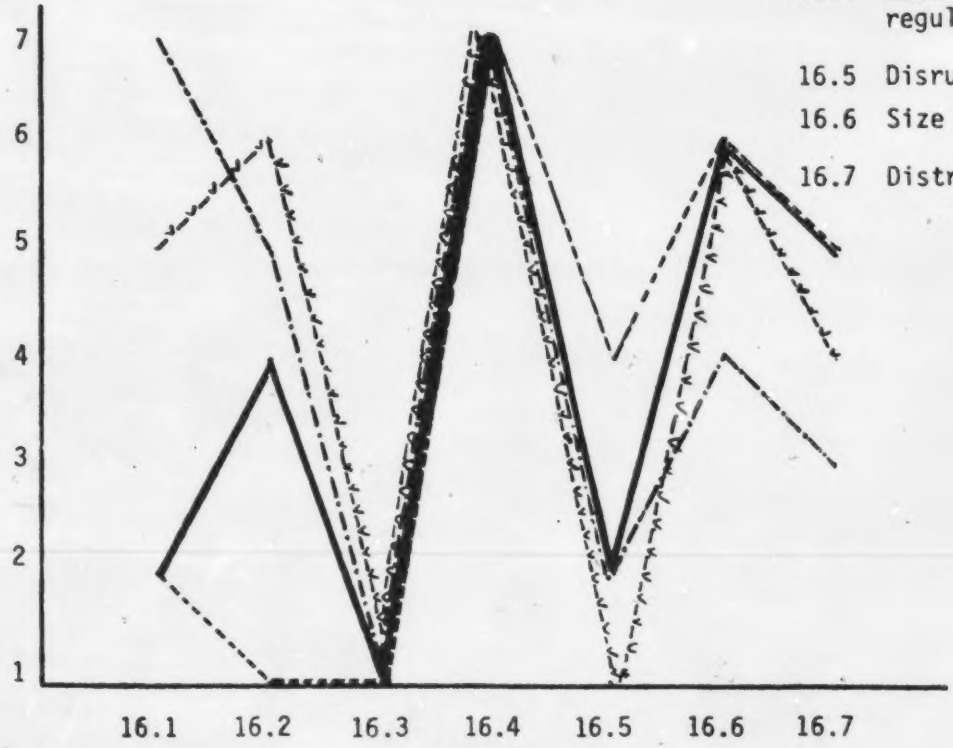
15.4 Series of intensive(e.g.2 wks) inservice courses

15.5 Six months,full time,post-training at CAE or Uni.



Overall
Non Gov.Ctry.H.S
Non Gov.Met.Prim.
also
Gov.Met.H.S.

Fig. 9: PRINCIPALS RANKING OF FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT THE INTEGRATION OF MIH STUDENTS INTO REGULAR CLASSES



16.1 Attitudes of other ch'n in class

16.2 Attitudes of regular class teacher

16.3 Attitudes of parents of 'normal' ch'n in class

16.4 Lack of skills & competencies of regular teacher

16.5 Disruption of regular class program

16.6 Size of regular class

16.7 Distractible behav.of these ch'n

Overall ————
Gov.Met.Prim. – – – –
Non Gov.Met.High –·–·–
Gov.Met.Spec.Sch. –v–v

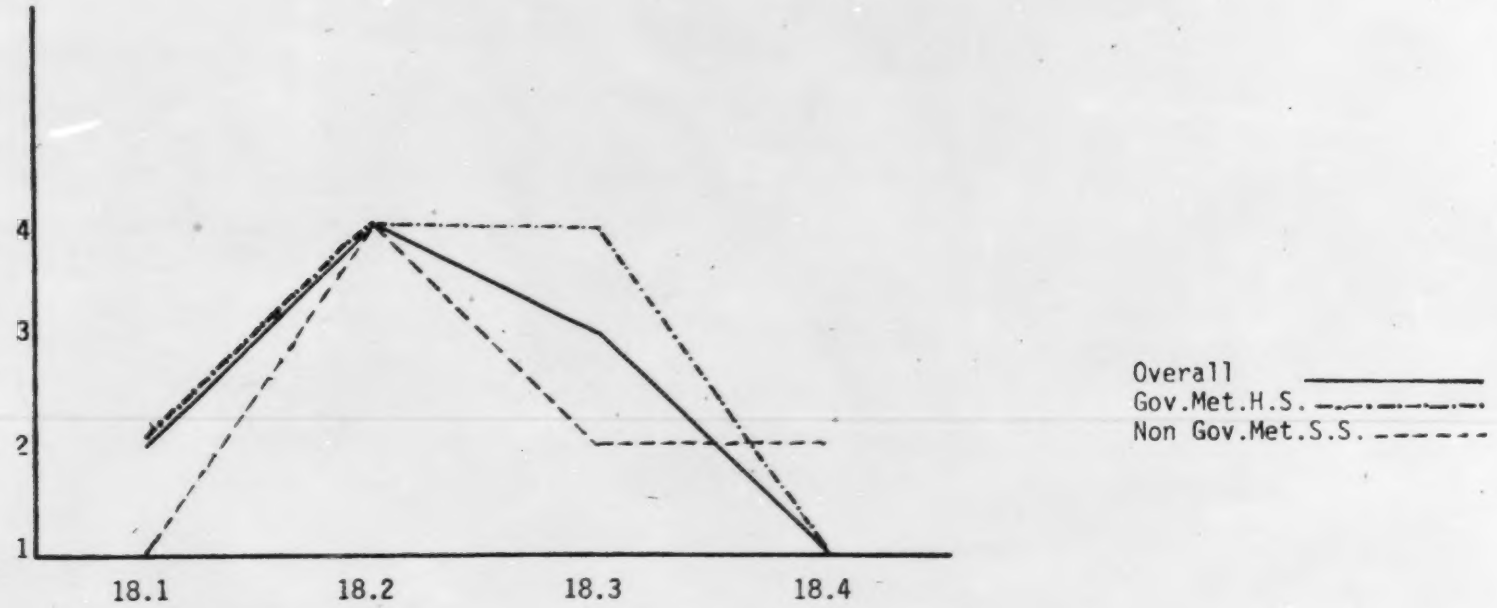
ig. 10: PRINCIPALS RANKING OF RELEVANCY OF DIFFERING PRE-VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

18.1 Art,craft & dom.science

18.2 Basic skills & WEP in community

18.3 Basic academic & social skills

18.4 Specific job skill training



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PARMENTER, Trevor R. On-Going Assessment of Work Undertaken by Trainees.

PARMENTER, Trevor R. A Model for the Evaluation of Vocational Preparation Programs for the Learning Disabled.

WARD, James, PARMENTER, Trevor R., RICHES, Vivienne and HAURITZ, Margory. A Study of the Attitudes of N.S.W. School Principals Toward the Educational and Pre-Vocational Provisions for the Mildly Intellectually Handicapped.

HAURITZ, Margory, RICHES, Vivienne, PARMENTER, Trevor R. and WARD, James. Program Development for the Acquisition of Work and Social Skills.

PARMENTER, Trevor R., HAURITZ, Margory, RICHES, Vivienne and WARD, James. A Comparison of Two Methods of Teaching a Reading Task to Mildly Intellectually Handicapped Adolescents.